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RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 0271
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0316
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0462
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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT ESTABLISHES HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

REF: A. 05 NOUAKCHOTT 1279

[1](#)B. NOUAKCHOTT 279

[1](#)C. NOUAKCHOTT 562

Classified By: Amb. Joseph LeBaron, Reasons 1.4 (b),(d)

[1](#)1. (U) The transitional government's cabinet adopted a bill establishing a National Human Rights Commission May 17. The idea for the commission was first proposed in "National Consultations" that took place in October between political parties, NGO's and transitional government authorities (ref A).

[1](#)2. (U) Communication Minister Cheikh Ould Ebbe said the commission will serve a "consultative" role with the Military Council for Justice and Democracy on all questions related to human rights. Ebbe said the commission would make proposals on future human rights legislation, as well as "follow-up on the conditions of individuals held in detention." Ebbe added that the commission would be "an independent structure...with administrative and financial autonomy."

[1](#)3. (C) The Director General of Human Rights in the government's Office of Human Rights and the Fight against Poverty, and Economic Insertion Mr. Koita Bamariam told Poloff that the newly created commission could serve "a more independent role" than could his office, thanks to their "public role as an independent entity, separate from the government." Bamariam said the next step in the process would be the selection of commissioners, which he expected to take place over the coming months "in consultation with the political parties and civil society."

[1](#)4. (C) Embassy Comment. The creation of a truly independent human rights commission would be a significant step here. It is likely that such a commission would play an integral role in addressing the acutely sensitive issues of Arab - Black African relations, specifically the communal violence of 1989 and the return of Black African Mauritanian refugees now in Senegal and Mali. These issues have received enhanced focus of late (refs B & C) and for many, the creation of this human rights commission is one more step towards confronting these issues. End Embassy Comment.
LeBaron